

A TRIBUTE TO AMERICA'S SOCIAL WORKERS

HON. BOB ETHERIDGE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 27, 2001

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to America's social workers. March is National Social Work Month and I think it is fitting that we take time to thank these outstanding citizens for their honorable work.

Since I was first elected to the House over four years ago, I have employed at least one social worker as a member of my district staff. I had worked with social workers before during my tenure as North Carolina's Superintendent of public schools, and I was impressed with their versatility and the positive impact of their work on people's lives. Together the social workers on my staff and I have assisted veterans and seniors, and helped new immigrants pursue the American Dream in our great country.

About a month ago, I held a meeting with my youth advisory committee to talk about youth and school violence. We had a great meeting and we talked candidly about the issues that the young people of my district face on a daily basis. At one point during the meeting, we broke into small groups, which were led by faculty, administrators, and school social workers. I was particularly drawn to one of the small groups led by Kelly Lister, a school social worker from Zebulon. She did a marvelous job of interacting with the students and offered some practical and poignant thoughts for her group to consider.

Unfortunately, there are not enough school social workers in our schools. For example, in Johnston County, North Carolina, there is only one school social worker for all 29 schools in the system. We need more school social workers, like Kelly to work with our students, to help them grow and mature. In many instances they are a link between home, school, and community. They help students increase academic performance, deal with crisis situations, learn how to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence, practice important problem-solving and decision-making skills, and most importantly remain in school and graduate. School social workers are a critical component in a child's education and we owe them a debt of gratitude for their hard work and service.

Social workers effect our lives in so many ways. Their work touches all of us as individuals and as whole communities. They are educated, highly trained, and committed professionals. They work in family service and community mental health agencies, schools, hospitals, nursing homes, and many other private and public agencies. They listen. They care. And most importantly, they help those in need.

Mr. Speaker, social workers are an integral, irreplaceable part of our society. I urge all of my colleagues to take the time to honor all the social workers in their districts for all of their contributions and accomplishments during the remainder of National Social Work Month.

CELEBRATING THE WILLOWRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL BOYS BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. TOM DeLAY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 27, 2001

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call special attention to the achievements of the Willowridge High School Boys Basketball team of Sugar Land, Texas. This year, the Willowridge Eagles won their second consecutive 5A State championship on March 9th, 2001.

Undefeated in 39 games last season, the Willowridge Eagles extended their winning streak to 62 games over two years. Led by a veteran group of seniors, the Eagles also defeated three nationally ranked schools when they traveled north to win the "Slam Dunk to the Beach" Tournament in Lewes, Delaware. Willowridge was recognized as the Number Two team in the country in USA Today's Super 25 boys basketball rankings.

On their journey to the championship, Coach Ronnie Courtney and the Eagles have proven that they are one of the best high school basketball teams in the country. Their commitment to teamwork on-and-off the court has brought them both the state championship and national accolade. I congratulate the Willowridge Eagles. They have not only won the championship, but also the appreciation of their fans in Sugar Land, Texas, and across America.

APRIL CITIZEN OF THE MONTH—
KARAN "BOBBY" KUMAR**HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 27, 2001

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I have named Karan "Bobby" Kumar, Chairman of the Board at Nassau Health Care Corporation, as Citizen of the Month in the Fourth Congressional District for April 2001.

Bobby is a prominent leader in both the Indian Community on Long Island and in his health care profession. As a nurse, I know how important the Nassau Health Care Corporation is to our district.

Kumar is a charismatic and hard working individual who has grown from a simple beginning into a respected individual in the society. The Nassau Health Care Corporation employs over 4,200 employees and is comprised of a 631-bed medical center, five health centers and is one of the largest nursing homes in the country with 889 beds.

An entrepreneur who has worked his way up from a bus boy to a successful businessman, Kumar now owns many successful businesses including a publishing company, and a construction and environmental company. Kumar Enterprises, a manufacturing company specializing in paint, is his most recent start-up.

His leadership role in the Indian community is extensive. In the past, he has published the Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and American Yellow Pages. He is the chairman of the International Punjabi Welfare Council, and has re-

ceived awards from the American Federation of Muslims of Indian Origin, the Indian Association of Long Island, the Indian Professional Engineers Association of USA, and the News India Times.

Yet his community involvement reaches outside the Indian community. He has been honored by various organizations including the Battered Women's Association, Nassau Association for the Help of Retarded Children, and the Convenience Stores Association. He was recognized by Newsday as the January 2000 Long Island Man of the Century.

Kumar and his wife, Roisin Meegan, have five children. I congratulate Bobby and his family on this achievement.

PRAISING THE HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAM AT TRINITY COLLEGE

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 27, 2001

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the work of the human rights program at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut for its dedication to increasing awareness of human rights injustices around the world and the active role it has taken in the campaign against such abuses. Because of the tireless efforts of Maryam Elahi, the Director of the program, Trinity College boasts a human rights program that is believed to be the only undergraduate interdisciplinary human rights program in the United States, challenging its students to become active participants in the fight against human rights violations around the world. This Friday will mark yet another instance of Trinity's dedication.

On March 30, 2001, the Human Rights Program will be hosting a ceremony calling attention to the plight of three teachers being held as political prisoners in Myanmar, the country formerly known as Burma. Ms. Ma Thida Htway, Mr. U Ye Tint, and Ms. Ma Khin Khin Leh. Their story has caught the attention of many world leaders including Her Majesty, Queen Rania al-Abdulla of Jordan. I am honored to have Queen Rania as a guest of the First Congressional District and as the keynote speaker of Friday's ceremony.

The three teachers were arrested in July 1999 with a dozen other activists in connection to a march that had been planned commemorating the assassination of independence hero General Aung Sand and supporting the National League for Democracy (NLD). Ms. Ma Thida Htway, an elementary school teacher, was arrested for attempting to organize the 1999 uprising and creating a human rights movement. Mr. U Ye Tint, a private tutor, was helping students of the uprising produce pamphlets. Ms. Ma Khin Khin Leh, a nonpolitical, was arrested together with her three-year-old daughter, after the Military Intelligence was unable to locate her political activist husband. After five days her daughter was released; however, Ma Khin Khin Leh sits in an unspecified prison for a life sentence. The two others were also sentenced to lengthy prison terms in a trial that fell short of the international standards for fair trials. All have been brutalized and tortured because of their political beliefs. This cannot continue.

The plight of these three teachers is just one of many human rights abuses which occur

everyday. I have joined my distinguished colleagues and co-chairs of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, Mr. Lantos and Mr. Wolf, and many of my other colleagues, in a letter to Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt, Secretary of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar, calling on him to review their cases and release them immediately and unconditionally. It is my hope that our efforts will generate a victory in the battle for the three teachers; and ultimately, have a positive impact on the war against human rights abuses.

Here in the United States, we take for granted the inalienable rights afforded to us by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The freedoms of speech, expression, and assembly are all rights exercised by American citizens everyday. We often forgot these rights, which our forefathers fought so vigorously to ensure, are not freedoms enjoyed by all citizens of our world. I praise Trinity College for recognizing the significance of this international epidemic and urge my colleagues to join in the international campaign to combat these horrific violations of human rights.

SU CLINICA FAMILIA

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 27, 2001

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Su Clinica Familia (Spanish for "your family clinic"), a comprehensive primary health care service center in the Rio Grande Valley, on their 30th anniversary of operation in South Texas, and I ask my colleagues to join me in the observation of this important milestone.

Su Clinica's work over the years has provided the only medical care available to so many migrant workers and low-income families in the Valley over the past three decades. On the anniversary of their 30th year in service to South Texas, we are breaking ground on April 6th to celebrate the new dimension of their work: academia.

Su Clinica is now a major principal partner with the Regional Academic Health Center (RAHC), and they will be the primary training ground for RAHC. This will be a new direction for them in which they will recruit, train, and retain doctors and health care professionals, all in the Rio Grande Valley.

Su Clinica burst onto the South Texas community health scene in 1971 to improve the health for families in Cameron and Willacy Counties in South Texas. Su Clinica was the dream of a group of generous patrons, the Archdiocese of Brownsville and other charity groups, all who wanted to see health care available to migrant and seasonal farm workers.

I have particular, personal appreciation for Su Clinica Familia. As a former migrant worker, I have a unique perspective of what it is like to be unable to afford health care. I have vivid memories from my childhood about the health of my family. We had no health insurance, and thankfully we were relatively healthy.

But when one of us was sick, my father would gather us up, no matter what the time of day, to pray for whoever was sick. That was our health insurance. I still advocate that peo-

ple pray for their loved ones when they are sick, but no one should be without basic health care today.

Su Clinica's unique health care services increase the self-worth of the people treated there. That self-worth is evident in the faces of the people who walk out of the clinic. The resulting longevity of their lives makes for happier families and healthier South Texans.

I have long had a working relationship with this leader in health care in the Rio Grande Valley. There is an enormous population in South Texas that have no access to health care, and Su Clinica has gone a long way toward decreasing that overall number.

From seeking the causes of anencephaly along the border in the early 1990s, to working together today to stem the epidemic of rampant, drug resistant tuberculosis along the border, our relationship has been strong and productive. The new direction in becoming the primary training ground for young doctors and health professionals is a natural outgrowth of Su Clinica's three decades of work for our community.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in congratulating Su Clinica Familia for their longevity and success in bringing health care to low-income South Texans, at a time and in a place where the quality of health care has international repercussions.

A BILL TO PERMANENTLY EXTEND THE WORK OPPORTUNITY AND WELFARE-TO-WORK TAX CREDITS AND IMPROVE THE PROGRAMS

HON. AMO HOUGHTON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 27, 2001

Mr. HOUGHTON. Mr. Speaker, Today I am joined by my colleague from New York, Mr. RANGEL, in introducing our bill, "The Work Opportunity Improvement Act of 2001." The bill would permanently extend the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) and the Welfare-to-Work Credit (W-t-W) and make one other change discussed below. Both programs are currently due to expire on December 31, 2001.

As we reintroduce the bill to permanently extend the programs, I want to note how please I was to receive a report dated March 13, 2001 from the General Accounting Office which concluded that there is little evidence, if any, that employers are "churning" employees to take advantage of multiple credits. This report puts aside the churning charge that has surfaced in the past, and reflects favorably on the integrity of the programs.

Because there have been a number of improvements in the programs over the past few years, they are being well received in providing employment, with training, for our disadvantaged. During the past five years, WOTC and W-t-W have been an integral part in helping over a million and a half low-skilled individuals dependent on public assistance, enter into the work force. That does not mean there can't be further improvements to the programs. We will continue to review the programs for improvements that will benefit all the parties involved.

Such training can be costly and the credits provide an incentive to employers to hire the

disadvantaged and provide the needed training while offsetting costs associated with the latter effort. Of course, many believe the programs would be even more successful if they could be extended indefinitely. We hear from both employers and state job services, which administer the programs, that the continued uncertainty surrounding short-term extensions impedes expanded participation and improvements in program administration. If the programs were made permanent, employers, both large and small, would be induced to expand their recruitment efforts and encourage the states to improve the administration of the programs. Such a change would benefit everyone.

The other provision in the bill would expand the food stamp category by increasing the age limit from 24 to 50 years of age. The current ceiling of 24 limits the availability of individuals in this targeted category. There are many individuals, over the age of 24, who could be gainfully employed if the age limit was expanded. Currently, the programs do an excellent job of helping women on welfare enter into the workforce. Over 80% of the hires in the programs are women. However, men from welfare households face a greater barrier to hire because they are no longer eligible for welfare once they turn 18. However, they can qualify if they are a member of a household receiving food stamps. But again, the age limit on the food stamp category is 24. We believe increasing that age limit to 50 will provide employers an incentive to hire such individuals and provide them with a sense of personal responsibility and self-esteem in assuming their responsibility as parents and members of society.

We use our colleagues to join us in cosponsoring this important legislation to extend and improve the two programs.

IN HONOR OF WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH—RECOGNIZING NEW MEXICO WOMEN

HON. HEATHER WILSON

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 27, 2001

Mrs. WILSON. Mr. Speaker, in honor of Women's History Month, I asked New Mexicans to send me nominations of women in New Mexico who have given special service to our community, but may have never received recognition for their good deeds.

I received twenty-eight worthy nominations describing sacrifices and contributions these women have made for our community. The people who nominated the women described the dedication they have witnessed: volunteer hours for veteran services, Sunday School Teachers, service on non-profit boards, homeless programs, fund raising for scholarships for at risk youth, healthcare providers going above the call of duty, child advocates, volunteers at churches and synagogues, successful business women, wives, mothers and friends.

Allow me to share examples of the nominations.

Lydia Ashanin—A community volunteer since the age of 10. She has actively mentored many young women through Big Brothers/Big Sisters and other youth programs. Lydia is a committed volunteer for